REMARKS

In the Official Action mailed **December 17, 2003**, the Examiner reviewed claims 1-10, 12-25, 27 and 28. Claims 1-2, 5-10, 12-13, 16-17 and 20-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by Nakanishi et al. (EP 0 903 677 A2, hereinafter "Nakanishi"). Claims 3, 14, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakanishi in view of Sudhakaran et al. (USPN 6,161,150, hereinafter "Sudhakaran"). Claims 27 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakanishi in view of Devarakonda et al. (EP 0 665 495 A2, hereinafter "Devarakonda").

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) and35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Independent claims 1, 12, and 16 were rejected as being anticipated by Nakanishi. Applicant respectfully points out that Nakanishi is directed to **locking pages in a hypertext document** for editing purposes (see Nakanishi, Abstract).

In contrast, the present invention is directed to **locking hardware devices, appliances, systems, and storage mechanisms** to manage these hardware devices and to enforce policies without human or higher-level program intervention (see page 7, line 11 to page 8, line 2 of the instant application). Locking hardware devices is not the same as locking pages in a hypertext document. Locking hardware devices prevents multiple users from accessing the hardware device simultaneously. Note that locks generally relate to code, data structures, or other software resources. The present invention is novel in that it uses locks to manage accesses to hardware devices in a distributed system. There is no suggestion within Nakanishi, Sudhakaran, or Devarakonda, either separately or in concert, which suggests locking hardware devices, appliances, systems, and storage mechanisms.

Accordingly, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 12, and 16 to clarify that the present invention locks hardware devices, appliances, systems, and storage mechanisms to manage these hardware devices and to enforce policies without human or higher-level program intervention. These amendments find support on page 7, line 11 to page 8, line 2 of the instant application.

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Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 12, and 16 as presently amended are in condition for allowance. Applicant also submits that claims 2-10 and 27, which depend upon claim 1, claims 13-15, which depend upon claim 12, and claims 17-25 and 28, which depend upon claim 16, are for the same reasons in condition for allowance and for reasons of the unique combinations recited in such claims.
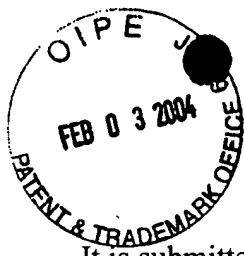
CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the present application is presently in form for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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